

# Pass Around a Primary Source

**MLL**  
middle level learning



4  
"Had fifty dollars when set out. Went to Phoenix, picked cotton, pulled bolls made eighty cents a day with two people pulling bolls. Stayed until school closed. Went to Idaho, picked pears until August."

—Daughter of ex-tenant farmers, 1939

3



Supplement to  
National Council for the  
Social Studies Publications  
Number 38  
May/June 2010  
[www.socialstudies.org](http://www.socialstudies.org)

## Contents

- 2** Primary Source of the Day:  
A Warm Up Activity  
*Amy Trenkle*
- 6** Highlights in History: Teaching  
with Differentiated Instruction  
*Kay A. Chick*
- 11** Racing Around the World:  
A Geography Contest to  
Remember  
*C. Steven Page*
- 16** Racing Around the World  
Questions about the  
Destinations

### ON THE COVER

This montage uses three primary historical sources: (1) A detail from a photograph by Dorothea Lange taken in Imperial Valley, California, for the Farm Security Administration in 1939. This photo of a girl, available free online from the Library of Congress (LOC), can be easily found by searching on the key word “cotton” or by using its reproduction number (LC-DIG-fsa-8b15447) at [www.loc.gov/pictures](http://www.loc.gov/pictures). (2) An excerpt from the lengthy caption for that photo, summarizing an interview with the subject. (3) A photo in the background of a cotton field in 1922, no location given, also from LOC (LC-USZ62-128052). (4) Students can pass around an actual boll of cotton hand-to-hand (photo credit: Forest & Kim Starr/[commons.wikimedia.org](http://commons.wikimedia.org)).

#### Middle Level Learning

Steven S. Lapham MLL EDITOR

Richard Palmer ART DIRECTOR

Michael Simpson DIRECTOR OF PUBLICATIONS

©2010 National Council for the Social Studies

# Primary Source of the Day

## A Warm-Up Activity

Amy Trenkle

A few years ago, I looked at my teaching and decided that I need to ramp it up a little. I wanted something that would challenge me to think outside of the box. I also needed a better way to draw my students into the topic of each day’s lesson right from the start of every class. What I came up with is a Primary Source of the Day Warm Up.

I teach eighth grade U.S. history and heavily rely on primary sources within my curriculum. With the abundance of primary sources that have been digitized, it has been fairly easy to find them. Using a complex primary source as the focus of a lesson often calls for careful planning and at least one 50-minute period to explain, analyze, and discuss what the source meant at the time of its creation, and what it means for us today. For example, a runaway slave ad from 1840 is a historical document rich with meaning, one that requires at least a 50-minute period to examine and discuss with students.<sup>1</sup>

But not every primary source requires such lengthy study. A one-sentence quote from Ben Franklin or Thomas Paine is a great way to spark a lesson about the Revolutionary Era. A boll of cotton on its stem makes memorable a lesson about life in the antebellum South. An incandescent (filament) light bulb can ignite my opening description of Thomas Edison and the Industrial Age.

Almost every class period, I begin with a primary source. The primary source (a text; a photocopy of an image, photograph, or object; or an actual object) might serve as a review of yesterday’s lesson, a transition to today’s lesson, or an overture to a whole new topic. Students might easily relate the source to something they’ve learned, or it might appear to them as totally unexpected and strange. I post a question about the historical source on the board, and I ask students to write a short response to that question (which I eventually collect and score) and to discuss it. This warm up activity has benefits in terms of academic learning, social skills, and classroom management.

### Gathering a Collection

Surprisingly, coming up with a primary source for each day of the week did not require much additional work, especially since I knew the curriculum that I would be teaching. I went online and scoured through material at home. If I were teaching a course for the first time, preparing a different item to present to the class each day might seem like a more daunting task, but then again it might help me organize my teaching strategy.

I have used a lot of different types of primary sources. Some of my favorite types include:

- Quotes from a notable person from a historical period that we’re learning about (which can introduce historical figures not mentioned in the textbook);

- Political cartoons (current or historical),
- Objects that students can handle (a brick of tea when discussing the Boston Tea Party, or a buffalo horn when discussing Native American life on the Plains),
- Copies of documents (such as patents, letters, or newspaper articles),
- Photographs, sketches, and art work (but see caveats about art, below).

I'd recommend these websites for finding primary historical texts and images:

- National Archives, [www.nara.gov](http://www.nara.gov)
- Library of Congress, The Learning Page, [memory.loc.gov/learn](http://memory.loc.gov/learn)
- National Museum of American History, [americanhistory.si.edu/collections/index.cfm](http://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/index.cfm)
- National Park Service, Teaching with Museum Collections, [www.nps.gov/history/museum](http://www.nps.gov/history/museum)
- NCSS Online U.S. History Collection (See page 5), [www.socialstudies.org/teacherslibrary](http://www.socialstudies.org/teacherslibrary)

I also find that summer institutes and my own travel help me find great historical sources and objects. National Park Service bookstores are a great place to find artifacts, or models of artifacts. While my examples have come from U.S. history, the same idea could be done with world history, geography, or other social studies disciplines.

### Primary and Secondary Sources

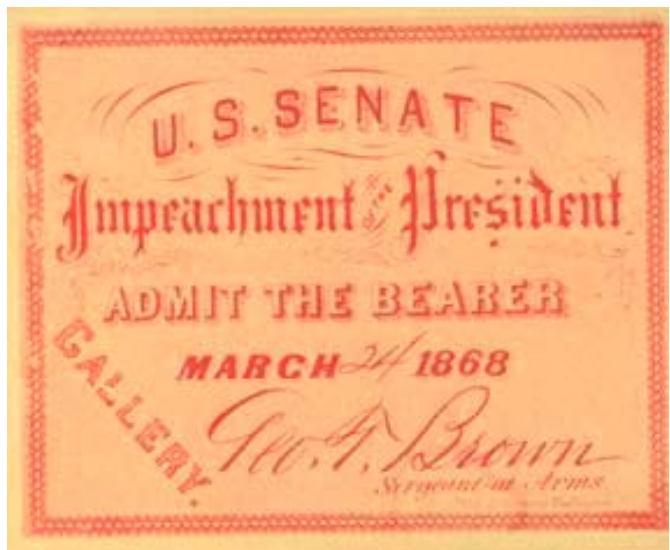
I'm careful to reveal the fact to my students when one of my "primary sources" is a model, and not the real object. For example, a railroad spike painted gold drives home the story of the transcontinental railroad, completed on May 10, 1869. On another day, however, students carefully pass around a family letter from my own collection of real historical artifacts.

On some days I will bring in a photo of a sculpture, monument, or painting. While many of these are not technically primary historical sources (see **SIDEBAR**), they do allow my students to think about why a work of art was created. They provide an opportunity to discuss terms like "primary historical source," "original," "replica," "evidence," "bias," and "allegory." We also discuss the fragility of many primary historical sources and why it is important to take care of them in archives and museums.

I will admit that it does take some investigation of primary historical sources to get the process started. But I now have



A Cartoon of September 24, 1922, by Clifford Berryman.



Admission ticket to the impeachment of President Andrew Johnson, 1868.

#### SIDEBAR

### What is a Primary Source?

A primary source is a piece of information about a historical event or period in which the creator of the source was an actual participant in or a contemporary of a historical moment. The purpose of primary sources is to capture the words, the thoughts, and the intentions of the past. Primary sources help you to interpret what happened and why it happened.

Examples of primary sources include documents, artifacts, historic sites, songs, or other written and tangible items created during the historical period you are studying.

— National History Day, [www.nhd.org/ConductingResearch.htm](http://www.nhd.org/ConductingResearch.htm)

composed a binder of warm ups (sources and related questions), and I actually love to look for new documents, images, and objects to augment my collection.

### Good Questions

If the primary source is a text document or an image of some sort, I might project it with the LCD projector onto the front board, or use an overhead projector, or I might make photocopies so that each student can have one.

If the primary source is an object, then I usually stand at the door (where I greet them everyday) with the item in my hands. On days when an object will be passed around, I allow a little more time for the warm up, because many students want to hold and examine it.

When I present a primary source to the class, I pose a question that will help students to examine and interpret it. The question may be written on the board, appear on the overhead, or be part of the handout. It may be about the factual content of a document, or it may require observations about an object's appearance. On other days, my question might solicit student opinion, or it could call for interpretation or analysis. I give my students three minutes to review the primary source and begin to formulate an answer to the question on the board. Students draft their answer onto a one-page form. Here are some typical questions:

- Who is in the cartoon? What do these figures symbolize? What title would you give the cartoon?
- What is this poster about? What does "Annexation" mean? Why were some people against the annexation of Texas?
- What does this drawing show? What facts about slavery does it reveal?
- How is this artifact an example of "checks and balances?"
- Do you agree with the following quote? Why or why not?
- How are these pages from an American Colonial textbook different from your textbook today?
- What does this map tell us about the world (as people understood it) in 1507? Cite specific examples from this map in your answer.

### Classroom Management

This warm-up activity also has a classroom management function. On Mondays, I give each student a form with spaces for writing about the primary source, one space for each day of the week. While students are thinking and writing their response to the question on the board, I walk about the room, looking to see whether students are in their seat, prepared with their

materials, and engaged in the task. If they are doing all of this, I put a sticker (or a stamp) on the form, which is worth three points. Students who are not fully prepared for class will not get the sticker, but they may still answer the question on their paper and receive one point. At this point, I am not concerned that a student's written answer is "correct," only that he or she is beginning to focus on the topic of the day.

At the middle school level, this system of stickers works well. It's a quick way for me to reward students for being on time, prepared, and ready to engage in the lesson. One student last year said, "I think [this activity] helped us get our mind going and obviously cut down on wasted time in the beginning of class." Another said the warm ups "told us to focus!"

### Social Skills

After three or four minutes, I ask someone in the class to read the question aloud, and I call on someone else to share what they wrote. Some days I take volunteers, other days it's "teachers pick," and I select which students we'll hear from. It is important at the beginning of the school year that my students learn not to snicker at someone's "dumb" idea. Many times, an obtuse observation (per the perspective of a thirteen-year-old child) is useful, or even correct. I emphasize that we can all learn from one another.

The more my students participate in this kind of collaborative activity, the more they realize that they have a lot to learn from each other's comments. Students will say that they wrote one idea initially, but when they heard their peer's comments, they have a new thought, and would rather write about that. By the end of the semester the discussions flow more naturally.

### Scoring Student Work

I collect the completed forms on Fridays. If a student has a "wrong" answer on the form, I don't penalize him or her for it. During the warm up, or sometimes later in the period, I give a full accounting of the primary source—where it came from and what its specific significance is—correcting any misconceptions or factual inaccuracies. But I do not expect students to correct their initial ideas on the warm-up sheet.

I can grade these forms very quickly. At first, students think that the daily warm up doesn't count for much, but they soon realize that three points a day adds up to 15 points a week, and more than 100 points for our ten-week term, which is equivalent to a major test! These points are my measurement of classroom participation.

My students (and their parents) always ask, "what if the student is absent? Is he/she excused from the warm up?" My answer is very simply, "no." If students would like to find out what the warm up was during their absence, they can visit after school, examine the primary source, and write about it. I will credit them with a point for this visit, but there is no way to make up a missed warm up. As I tell the students, there's something to be said for being in class. Yes, you may be able to read a

document or handle an object, but I can't help you make up the conversation that we had in class.<sup>2</sup>

### Student Feedback

At the end of the year, I have students reflect in writing on what they liked and disliked about my social studies class. Did the warm ups expose them to new ideas and new primary sources? Some of their responses follow:

- “Yes, because at some point in time I will read or watch something and it was already taught to me so I will know the answer or what is being talked about.”—Emonie
- “I do because I looked at things that I normally wouldn't and it helped me to understand.”—Dyani
- Yes, they were diverse and opened by eyes to life ‘back in the day!’—Tatiana
- “Yes, because they prepared us for the unexpected!”—Sertira
- “They taught us [about] new people and new ways of life from their perspective.”—Gary
- “The primary sources brought new ideas to my mind.”—Raina
- “I was exposed to political cartoons and a lot of other objects and documents.”—Anonymous

One student wrote, “I liked listening to all of the responses [from other students].” To me, that's what a successful history classroom is about: students basing their discussion on a primary source, learning from each other, and analyzing and evaluating the evidence of history.

### Memorable Items

Here are some of my students' favorite primary sources of the day:

- “I think the most memorable was the raw cotton because I have never seen cotton in raw form, only as cotton balls and clothing.”—Anonymous
- “The Declaration of Sentiments was the most memorable primary source. It was memorable because it was about women's suffrage!”—Anonymous
- “The most memorable primary source was the tea block. It was memorable because it was just so pretty and I had never seen one.”—Emonie.

Another student echoed Emonie's reaction, “The tea block when we studied the Tea Act. It was interesting and helped us understand the Tea Act.”

- “I liked the porcupine quill that people used to remove stuff from their teeth. Though it was gross, it was also funny to think about how many other uses that could've been opted for!”—Tatiana
- “The textile piece because we talked about how dangerous life was in the textile mills for children.”—Malik

By the end of the year, I often have students suggesting primary sources that I could use next year. Tatiana, suggested adding video or audio clips of presidential speeches for our presidents unit!

Primary historical sources can be used in an assessment. A test question, of course, can ask students to interpret a historical quote. But other possibilities come to mind. Maybe next year, during the last week of school, I'll ask students to find and bring to class a primary source (or a copy of one) that relates to one of our units of study. Then I'll assign students to pose questions for discussion based on their source. That could be a culminating assignment that would be remembered. 🌐

*AMY TRENKLE teaches eighth grade history at Stuart-Hobson Middle School in Washington, DC, and is a NBCT (National Board Certified Teacher) in social studies.*

### Notes

1. Alan J. Singer, “Venture Smith's Autobiography and Runaway Ad: Enslavement in Early New York,” *Middle Level Learning* 28 (January/February 2007): 1-8; Tom Costa and Brooks Doyle, “Runaway Slave Advertisements: Teaching from Primary Documents,” *Middle Level Learning* 20 (May 2004): 4-7.
2. I changed one scoring procedure in the past year (following suggestions from students in the previous year). I now give one “free day.” If I normally have five days of class, that means I present five warm ups. If each day is worth 3 points, that means my week's total is 15 points—however, I set the maximum at 12. Students who were present for the entire week and earned all of their points also earned three extra credit points that week. If a student was absent one day, then no harm is done. However, if a student is absent more than one day and/or is unprepared for class for a string of days, it becomes evident in the point record.

## Primary Sources from NCSS Online

*Middle Level Learning* articles that employ primary historical sources can be found quickly in the members-only Archive. You can also search articles by grade level and historical period at the NCSS Online U.S. History Collection, [www.socialstudies.org/teacherslibrary](http://www.socialstudies.org/teacherslibrary). Many of these sources require a full class period, or more, to examine, analyze, and discuss with middle school students. Articles in the Teaching with Documents series in *Social Education* are also part of this online collection.

# Highlights in History: Differentiated Instruction in the Social Studies Classroom

Kay A. Chick

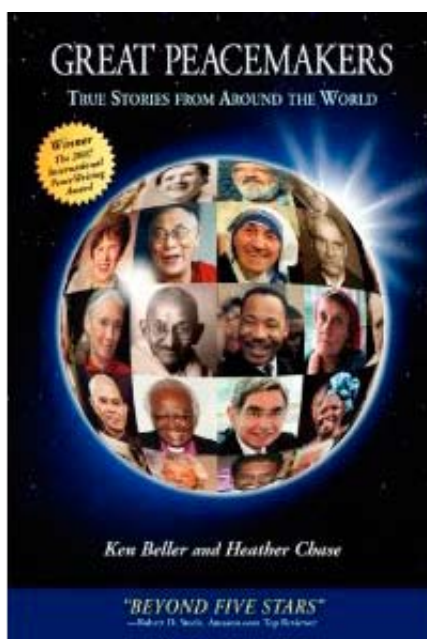
**M**r. Tillman's sixth grade students are preparing for a study of the Civil War. All twenty-four students in the class have discussed slavery and events leading up to the war. Mr. Tillman uses a sixth grade American history textbook, as well as children's literature for this Civil War study. The children, 15 girls and 11 boys, have reading levels that range from second grade through high school. Forty percent of students live below the poverty level. Ben, Carl, Philip, Danita, and Cheryl receive special education services for learning disabilities in the areas of reading and writing. Carl and Philip also have attention deficit disorder. Molly and Terrance are identified as gifted. Joseph has severe and profound learning difficulties, and is included in Mr. Tillman's general education class only for social studies. How might Mr. Tillman determine individual student needs? What types of student grouping might he use? How can he ensure the success of all the students in this social studies class?

We've come a long way since 1975, when Congress first passed the law now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). We find ourselves in the age of inclusive classrooms. Teachers like Mr. Tillman must strive to meet the needs of a wide range of student skills and abilities, ensuring that all students meet with success.<sup>1</sup> While the challenge of helping students reach high academic standards in social studies is great, teachers' belief systems do make a difference.

Teachers who modify curriculum and instruction to accommodate diversity and meet individual student needs are differentiating their instruction.<sup>2</sup> These teachers aim to provide high quality curriculum and instruction in combination with varying responses to mixed-ability learners. They plan proactively, knowing their students and recognizing that "teaching to the middle" will not work. They remain student centered, understanding that learning experiences must be interesting, relevant, and active. They value the assessment process and embed it throughout instruction, maintaining a clear focus on students' mastery levels. Last, these teachers craft multiple approaches to content, process, and products. They believe that by differentiating curriculum, instruction, and the work that students produce to demonstrate learning, students

will meet high academic challenges and their potential as learners.<sup>3</sup>

This article describes three instructional strategies and related techniques for differentiating the teaching of social studies concepts, using history as the focus. All strategies were designed to meet the needs of middle school students, while maintaining their interest, active involvement, and enthusiasm for learning. With the use of children's literature listed in the 2009 "Notable Social Studies Trade Books for Young People,"<sup>4</sup> I have described three examples to illustrate how teachers can differentiate by students' readiness, interests, and learning preferences.<sup>5</sup>



## Differentiating by Students' Readiness

"Teaching to the middle" (as if every child in the classroom were average in every way) can be a frustrating experience for students at risk of academic failure as well as for those who are working above grade level. Differentiating by students' readiness levels and abilities allows all students to focus on the same content, but at varying levels of

difficulty and abstractness. Tiered learning experiences allow all students to learn important content and skills, but within an appropriate range of challenges. TABLE 1 explains the steps to follow in creating a tiered learning experience.

**Table 1. Creating a Tiered Learning Experience**

<b>Step 1</b>	Select the concept or skill to be taught.
<b>Step 2</b>	Consider students' readiness levels and abilities and divide students into flexible groups.
<b>Step 3</b>	Draw a ladder with 2-4 rungs. Design a basic learning experience that would meet the needs of students who are working on grade level. Place the title of this experience on one of the middle rungs.
<b>Step 4</b>	Create variations of this learning experience, designing some that are more advanced (and place the title on an upper rung) and some that are more basic (and place on a lower rung), reflecting students' needs and abilities.
<b>Step 5</b>	Assign each flexible group to an appropriate activity. Or give each group a choice of activities from the appropriate levels. Also, the teacher may consider mixing up the membership of a group a little depending on any individual's interests and learning styles (as explained in the text).
<b>Step 6</b>	In a concluding class discussion or role play, all students should be able to contribute knowledgably to the conversation on the basis of their studies and assigned activities.

**Table 2 . Flexible Groups, Workcards, and Great Peacemakers**

For this activity, you can refer to the book *Great Peacemakers: True Stories from Around the World* by Ken Beller and Heather Chase.

<b>Card 1: Green Team</b>	<b>Card 2: Blue Team</b>	<b>Card 3: Red Team</b>
<p>Choose one individual from the book <i>Great Peacemakers: True Stories from Around the World</i>. Complete the following:</p> <p>Make a list of the reasons why your individual was considered to be a great peacemaker. Think of a person in your school or community who has some of these same qualities.</p> <p>Use a shoebox to make a diorama showing this person doing his/her good works. Be ready to share your diorama with the class.</p> <p>Choose a project you can do in your school that will benefit students and teachers. Organize your group, plan what each group member will do, get permission from your principal, and complete your volunteer project. Present your project to the class and discuss what went well and what the biggest challenges were.</p>	<p>Choose one individual from the book <i>Great Peacemakers: True Stories from Around the World</i>, or choose another person whom you consider to be someone who has changed society for the better. Using <i>Great Peacemakers</i>, library resources, and recommended Internet sites, complete the following:</p> <p>Identify the reasons why you believe your individual was a great peacemaker and/or was able to change society for the better. Present your findings in a creative way.</p> <p>Create a timeline of key events and accomplishments in this individual's life.</p> <p>Create an "open-minded portrait" of this individual. On the left side of the portrait, draw the person's facial features. Over a silhouette of the right side of the face, use words and pictures to describe this person's personality and character.</p> <p>Design a trifold board to display your work, and plan a 5-minute class presentation.</p>	<p>Choose one individual from the book <i>Great Peacemakers: True Stories from Around the World</i>, or choose another person whom you consider to be someone who has changed society for the better. Using <i>Great Peacemakers</i>, library resources, and Internet sources recommended by your teacher, complete the following:</p> <p>Find a song that you think reflects this individual's life. Be prepared to perform or play a recording of the song and discuss the relationship between the lyrics and melody and the changes this person brought to society.</p> <p>Write a newspaper article that describes an important event in this individual's life 20 years from now. Where has life taken this person and why? (If this person has passed away, imagine that they are still living.)</p> <p>Create a multimedia presentation that highlights this person's accomplishments and provides guidance to your classmates on how they can continue the good work of this individual.</p>

This activity is adapted from the work of Carol Ann Tomlinson, *The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of All Learners*, (Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1999).

This first example employs the book *Great Peacemakers: True Stories from Around the World* to exemplify the tiered learning experiences strategy. This book highlights the lives of twenty individuals who have promoted peace through their lives and accomplishments. Each chapter is illustrated and brief, allowing a student to read about persons of interest to him or her in no more than a few minutes.<sup>6</sup>

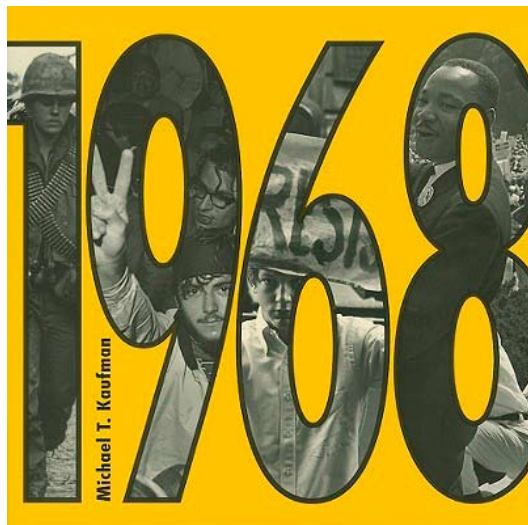
In this example, students are grouped into the green team (below grade level), the blue team (on grade level), and the red team (above grade level). Each group has a work-card that provides students with directions and a description of products they will create to demonstrate their learning.<sup>7</sup> (TABLE 2, page 7). If green team students are reading and writing below grade level, they may require direct instruction and assistance in reading the chapter and completing the work-card. Work-cards and other tiered learning strategies can also be created for students to work independently, rather than in groups.

Prior to the implementation of this lesson, teachers may wonder how grouping into teams is different from traditional ability grouping. Traditional ability groups place students in the same groups for an entire semester, or even for a year. Flexible grouping allows for student movement in and out of groups based on their needs and strengths during a particular lesson. For example, a sixth grade teacher might use this flexibility to address concerns about a student who struggles academically. While this student's literacy skills may be below grade level, his technology skills might be very well developed. Rather than placing him in the green team, he might be included in the red team so he could participate in the creation of a multimedia presentation. In addition, by allowing this student to listen to a pre-recorded reading of the chapter on the red team's peacemaker, he will be prepared to not only design the multimedia presentation (activity 3), but also help choose a song (activity 1), and type and edit the final draft of the newspaper article (activity 2).

### Differentiating by Students' Interests

Research suggests strong links between student interest and motivation, empowerment, and achievement. When students are offered choices that include topics of interest, they demonstrate increases in intrinsic motivation and independent work habits, and fewer off-task behaviors and discipline problems, all of which result in gains in student learning.<sup>8</sup> Interest inventories and My Bag presentations<sup>9</sup> are two activities teachers can use to discover students' interests and incorporate them into classroom instruction.

In this second example, I use the book *1968* to illustrate BINGO, a learning experience designed to enhance student interest through choices in topics and products they can create to demonstrate their learning.<sup>10</sup> *New York Times* reporter Michael T. Kaufman has created a book with historical photographs and interviews with people who witnessed that turbulent year. *1968*



*1968* allows students to explore this pivotal year in history through poetry, music, writing, interviews, and timelines.<sup>11</sup> Students can score a BINGO by completing the activities in one vertical, horizontal, or diagonal row (TABLE 3).

Teachers who implement *1968* BINGO may find there is not time for students to choose five activities to score a traditional BINGO. If that is the case, the BINGO card could be used as a “choice board.” Students can choose two or three activities to complete, and teachers can encourage students to discover a multitude of ways to demonstrate their learning

through the “free space” activity. Students who choose a time-consuming project, such as a videotaped “update of the life of Martin Luther King, Jr.,” may wish to focus their time and skills solely on that one project. The flexibility of these additional modifications provides students with the benefits of choice and empowerment to meet their individual needs.

### Differentiating by Students' Learning Preferences

Students learn in different ways and their learning preferences are made up of learning styles, intelligences, gender, culture, and personality types. Students who understand how they learn best also realize there is no good or bad way to learn, only diverse methods for learning.<sup>12</sup> Teachers who incorporate student learning preferences into instruction often observe a positive impact on learning and achievement. Although there are various learning preference models, many educators have found Howard Gardner's research on “multiple intelligences” a fertile source for developing new and creative activities in the classroom. Teachers who design instruction around Gardner's eight intelligences not only help students to discover their learning preferences, but also experiment with new and different ways of teaching and learning, as shown in this third example of differentiated instruction.<sup>13</sup>

The book *I'll Pass for Your Comrade: Women Soldiers in the Civil War* tells true stories of women who served as nurses, soldiers, and spies. Many disguised themselves as men and risked their lives to serve their country.<sup>14</sup> Assuming a historical persona can help students to understand what it might have been like to be Sarah Emma Edmonds who served as a nurse, combat soldier, and spy during the Civil War. Students



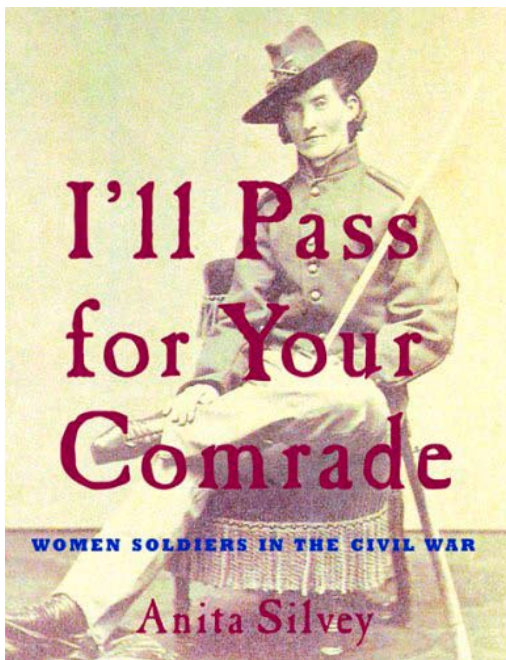
**Table 3. A BINGO Board and the Year 1968**

For this activity, you can refer to the book *1968* by Michael T. Kaufman.

<b>B</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>O</b>
Write a thank you note to someone in the book.	Carefully compose six questions, and then interview a parent or grandparent about what life was like in 1968.	Write a bio-poem about President Lyndon B. Johnson.	Research international events in 1968 and make a poster highlighting those events.	Design a world map and label locations of events in 1968. Add three events not discussed in the book.
Report on some events of 1968 in the style of a newscast from that era.	Design a timeline of key events in space exploration from 1968 to the present.	Write and perform a skit related to the civil rights movement.	Conduct an interview with Martin Luther King, Jr.	Read a different book on the Civil Rights movement and do a book talk.
Conduct an interview with Bobby Kennedy.	Create an artistic representation of the lives of John F. Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, and Ted Kennedy.	FREE SPACE Your choice	Compose a song or rap about the themes and events of 1968.	Write a newspaper article about the Vietnam War.
Create an advertisement for the year 1968. "Here's why you want to set your time-travel machine to the year 1968!"	Design a Powerpoint presentation about the Civil Rights Act of 1968.	Prepare a 5-minute presentation on why a curfew was imposed and the National Guard deployed in Memphis. (See p. 119)	Write five diary entries for one of the astronauts during the flight of Apollo 8.	Videotape a news update on the life of Martin Luther King, Jr. as if he had lived. What might he be doing today?
Use a Venn diagram to compare and contrast your life with how it might have been if you had lived in 1968. What would be the same in both periods? Unique to each era?	Write a letter to author Michael T. Kaufman and give him your opinion of his book <i>1968</i> .	Create a collage of key events that occurred in the year 1968.	Write a magazine advertisement or videotape a television advertisement for this book.	Perform a role play of the astronauts aboard Apollo 8. In part of the dialog, they discuss some current events happening back on Earth.

**Table 4 . You Are Private Franklin Thompson**

<p>Imagine that you are Sarah Emma Edmonds, disguised as Private Franklin Thompson, and you are enlisted in the 2nd Michigan voluntary infantry. You participated in the Civil War as a soldier, nurse, and spy for the Union Army and fought in several battles, including the Battle of Antietam. General McClellan sent you on ten espionage missions. When you contracted malaria, you deserted (so as not to be discovered) and spent some time recovering. You rejoined the army under your real name as a war nurse and served until the end of the war. In 1864 you published your memoirs, which sold 175,000 copies, and you donated the profits to help Union veterans. You received a military pension and were buried in 1898 with full military honors.</p> <p>Based on your experiences in the Civil War, select one of the following activities and be prepared to share your work in small groups. You can read more about the experiences of Sarah Emma Edmonds in <i>I'll Pass for Your Comrade: Women Soldiers in the Civil War</i> by Anita Silvey.</p> <p><b>Verbal/Linguistic</b> Prepare and tell a creative story about one of your espionage missions. If you like, dress the way you might have during your mission.</p> <p><b>Logical/Mathematical</b> Invent a secret code that you might have used to communicate with General McClellan during your espionage missions. Write a coded message that you might have written during the war for the class to decipher.</p> <p><b>Visual/Spatial</b> Use your artistic talents to create a pop-up book of your experiences that could help tell your story to elementary age students.</p> <p><b>Bodily/Kinesthetic</b> Enlist the help of classmates and perform a short skit depicting your experiences in a battle or espionage mission.</p> <p><b>Musical</b> Select a song that was popular during the Civil War period and perform it for the class by singing and/or playing an instrument.</p> <p><b>Interpersonal</b> Organize and participate in a debate on whether women should have a right to serve as soldiers in the Civil War.</p> <p><b>Intrapersonal</b> Write five journal entries describing some of your thoughts, feelings, and experiences during the Civil War.</p> <p><b>Naturalist</b> Construct a display of photographs, documents, and artifacts related to the Civil War. Highlight the experiences of women.</p>
---



choose one of the eight learning experiences to complete, each of which is based on Gardner's intelligences.

TABLE 4 (page 9) outlines an assignment involving a historical persona, which can be read aloud to the class. Share the outline of Gardner's eight intelligences with the students.<sup>15</sup> Some children may be very interested in determining "how they are smart" in order to demonstrate their strengths, so incorporating multiple intelligences theory into the lesson can boost the self-esteem of many students, especially those with disabilities. Students who want more information on the "ways they are smart" can complete a multiple intelligences checklist, such as the one in *Differentiating Instruction in the Regular Classroom: How to Reach and Teach All Learners, Grades 3-12*.<sup>16</sup>

Teachers who implement this activity may encounter initial resistance from boys when they are asked to assume the persona of a woman, Sarah Emma Edmonds. However, the excitement of the disguise and the interest in writing secret codes, creating pop-up books, and performing songs will soon help them move beyond issues of gender. Students might also be reminded that, on another day, you may ask the girls to speak in the voice of James Madison, Abraham Lincoln, or Martin Luther King, Jr.

## Conclusion

Integrating instructional strategies that consider students' readiness, interests, and learning preferences allow teachers the opportunity to differentiate instruction. These strategies, in combination with best practices in social studies instruction, help students to demonstrate motivation, enthusiasm, and a drive to succeed. In Mr. Tillman's inclusive classroom and

across our nation, these changes are helping to challenge and bring success to students with varying reading levels, diversity in learning preferences, and a range of abilities. ■

## Notes

1. "Heterogeneous grouping has been shown to improve overall learning," from NCSS Position Statement "Social Studies in the Middle School" (1991), [www.socialstudies.org/positions/middleschool](http://www.socialstudies.org/positions/middleschool).
2. Scott Willis and Larry Mann, "Differentiating Instruction: Finding Manageable Ways to Meet Individual Needs," *Curriculum Update* (Winter 2000): 1-7.
3. Carol Ann Tomlinson, *How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-Ability Classrooms*, 2nd ed. (Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2001).
4. National Council for the Social Studies, "Notable Social Studies Trade Books for Young People," *Supplement to Social Education* 73, no. 4 (May/June 2009): 1-16.
5. Carol Ann Tomlinson, *The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of All Learners*, (Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1999).
6. *Ibid.* (Adapted from the work of Carol Ann Tomlinson).
7. Ken Beller and Heather Chase, *Great Peacemakers: True Stories from Around the World*, (Sedona, AZ: LTS Press, 2008).
8. Diane Heacox, *Differentiating Instruction in the Regular Classroom: How to Reach and Teach All Learners, Grades 3-12*, (Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing, 2002).
9. Joni Turville, *Differentiating by Student Interest: Strategies and Lesson Plans*, (Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education, 2007).
10. Debby Zambo and William Brozo, *Bright Beginnings for Boys: Engaging Young Boys in Active Literacy*, (Newark, DE: International Reading Association, 2009).
11. Michael T. Kaufman, 1968 (New York: Roaring Book Press, 2009).
12. Adapted from Carol Ann Tomlinson, *Fulfilling the Promise of the Differentiated Classroom: Strategies and Tools for Responsive Teaching*, (Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2003).
13. Joni Turville, *Differentiating by Student Learning Preferences: Strategies and Lesson Plans*, (Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education, 2008).
14. Anita Silvey, *I'll Pass for Your Comrade: Women Soldiers in the Civil War*, (New York: Clarion, 2008).
15. Howard Gardner, *Intelligence Reframed: Multiple Intelligences for the 21st Century*, (New York: Basic Books, 1999).
16. Heacox.

KAY A. CHICK is an associate professor in the Division of Education, Human Development, and Social Sciences at Penn State—Altoona in Altoona, Pennsylvania.

# Racing Around the World

## A Geography Contest to Remember



C. Steven Page

**T**eaching geography to students living in a depressed economic area can be challenging because many have not even had the opportunity to travel to their state capital, let alone another country. It's hard to help students understand distances and travel times to other countries when they have never been more than forty miles from home. The Internet has made it easier for students to learn about other cultures and people. However, as anyone who has taught middle school can attest, motivating students to want to learn about other parts of the world can itself be a major hurdle.

### Reality Show

A genre of television programming that has exploded in the last decade is the “reality show.” While the majority of such shows are not suitable for children, there is one that might get students interested in world travel. The Amazing Race has had fourteen successful seasons. In this reality show, teams of two work together, traveling to various locations around the world while completing tasks along the way. After several weeks, the team that reaches the final destination first wins.

I've developed a classroom variation on this concept called “Racing Around The World.” When I began using this contest in seventh grade social studies in Georgia, the world geography curriculum focused on countries on the continents of Asia, Africa, and Australia. As the state curriculum has changed, I've revised the contest. A great aspect of this activity is that you can adapt it to most social studies subjects, middle grade levels, and resource collections (whether on paper or online). I chose not to assign grades during the contest, but a teacher could do so based on participation and accuracy of answers. Also, contest questions may appear on future tests.

### Learning Over Time

Like its television inspiration, “Racing Around The World” can take place over weeks or months. Set aside one day a week or every two weeks to run the competition. The length of the contest depends on the academic level of the students and how many destinations you choose. I prefer a contest that spans two months, which is unlike most other classroom simulations, which last for one class period.

This periodicity may be one reason why the contest seems so effective as a teaching strategy. The “lessons” are discontinuous in time, but connected by interesting questions and



Shiraz Chakera/commons.wikimedia.org

The Zuma Rock of Nigeria (2005).

social reinforcements: camaraderie with teammates and competition between teams.

### Preparation

Developing and implementing this contest requires some work on the part of the teacher, but the skills your students obtain and the knowledge they retain are well worth the work.

Plan a travel route that covers countries that your class will study during the year. Make sure to choose major cities that have international airports. Obtain the latitude and longitude of each city using the index at the back of a good atlas. Refer to a travel or airline website to determine realistic ticket prices.

Then develop three mandatory questions about each city or country that students will be “visiting.” Write one bonus question for each location, an optional question that requires students to research a topic more deeply.

Create contest money in different denominations, or borrow from a Monopoly game. Create a ticket form with blank spaces for location, time, and ticket price.

Create “passport folders” for the teams so that each has a place to keep a record of its work (answers to questions), its travel record (on a line map of the world), and travel money, as well as related items, such as a colorful world map. Obtain one or more playful rubber stamps for use by the “customs agent.”

Finally, assemble or prepare resources so that students have a reliable and easy access to accurate information about various countries.

### Geographic Resources

How students research the various locations will depend on the resources in your classroom, school library, and computer space. Make sure that students have access to wall maps, textbooks, and any other resources you might have collected. A great resource that I was able to obtain was sets of encyclopedias that were being discarded by our media center.

Consult with your media specialist, letting him or her know about the contest and the days you will be playing. I was allowed to send five students at a time to the media center, but I would send only one student from a team to avoid discipline problems there. Once the competition got rolling, students would also visit the media center on their own time.

If you are lucky enough to have computers in the classroom, consider how you will supervise their use. You may want to allow students to use only encyclopedias on CD, or to use only prescribed Internet sites. For example, the CIA World Factbook online provides histories for each country profiled. (<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html>. Be sure to type the “s” in the prefix, “https,” which denotes encryption “to assure visitor confidentiality.”)

I recommend avoiding searching with Google, since it can provide easy answers, thus preempting students from reading, or at least scanning through, information about a nation. Likewise, I prefer a published encyclopedia to Wikipedia.com, since this online resource is not edited or peer reviewed in a formal way (although its quality has improved).

### Classroom Management

To run the game, place your students in teams of two, keeping in mind ability level and personalities. I like to spread my high-achieving students among the different groups, and likewise for struggling students.

The days that your class engages in the contest should not be viewed as a free day—it is anything but that. On contest days, you would see every student in my class working and learning.

The contest can also be used to help with attendance, if your school struggles with this issue. An unexcused absence does not “freeze” a team, but it may be penalized a set amount of

contest money. At our school, truancy was a major issue, but on contest days, attendance was usually 100 percent.

### The Agent with Two Hats

You, the teacher, act as both the travel agent (wearing a wild travel hat if you wish) and as the customs agent (with a crisp official-looking cap).

Teams purchase airline tickets from the travel agent. On arriving in a new city, teams confront the customs agent, who inspects and stamps the group’s passport folder. At the end of each class, teams turn in their passport folders to the teacher, who keeps them securely until the next contest day.

### Egging Them On

Post the order of the teams in your classroom at the end of each contest day. This will keep the students motivated and interested in the contest between contest days. The group in the lead usually changes after each round as a result of various teams offering incorrect answers, or arriving at incorrect destinations. You may want to post the lead team’s name even during a round.

### Borrow with Interest

Due to the competitive nature of the contest, students are guarded with their answers and the correct names of destination cities. In my classroom, teams would not share answers, but would sometimes attempt to sell answers using contest money. Although money management was a key aspect of the contest, “purchasing answers” is not recommended.

What happens if a team runs out of money? The students have two options. They can borrow money from another group (with an interest rate of 5 percent per week) or from the travel agent. Either way, a team must write a contract that all interested parties sign.

### Geography Memorized

At the conclusion of the contest, have a discussion with your students about their travels, with a world map close at hand. What understanding have they gained about distance in time, space, and culture? What would they want to know about a country when preparing for a college semester abroad in a student exchange program? Where would they look for information?

One day in the hall, some eleventh grade students walked up to me and spoke about the contest they had played in seventh grade. We talked about their old teams and how they did in the race. Several students recalled specifically why they won—or lost. “We flew to Xian instead of Beijing!” It was amazing that they would remember so much from a contest that they had played four years earlier. 📖

*C. STEVEN PAGE is an assistant professor at Augusta State University in Augusta, Georgia. He taught middle school social studies in Burke county schools for five years.*

# Racing Around the World!

To begin the contest, read these procedures to the class:

1. "Racing Around the World" is a contest that runs for several weeks. The contest itself is not graded, but some of the information you learn during the contest will appear in future tests.
2. The "fun goal" of the contest is for your team to arrive at the final destination city before any other team. The real goal is for you to learn some facts about foreign countries and explore different ways of finding those facts.
4. Acting as a *travel agent*, I will give each team \$4,000 classroom dollars, a passport folder, and a simple world map with borders drawn, but with no nations labeled. You may purchase airline tickets with the money.
5. The contest starts when I announce the coordinates to the first city (for example, 41.49 degrees North Latitude; 87.37 degrees West Longitude).
6. Once your team locates the city (for example, Chicago), you buy a team airline ticket from the travel agent.
7. "Flying" to a new city takes ten minutes. I will write down the departure time to make sure that everyone behaves honestly.  
Use this flight time to begin researching the city you are traveling to. If a team is familiar with the resources and knows basic facts about the destination city and the nation in which it is located, that team will probably answer the upcoming questions more quickly.
8. If noise in the room becomes a major issue during these flights, I can penalize a team (time or money) for being off task or being too loud.
9. On arrival in the new city, meet with the customs agent to make sure you are in the correct place. If you are not, you have to rework the coordinates, buy new tickets (ouch!) and lose time flying to the correct city (double ouch!).
10. If a team runs out of money, it can borrow money from another group or it can borrow money from the travel agent. The interest charged will be 5 percent per week. Either way, a team must write a contract that all interested parties sign.
11. If you have arrived in the correct city, you must pass through customs. Acting as a *customs agent*, I will stamp your passport folder and then provide three mandatory questions and a bonus question. The questions are about the city and country you are now visiting.
12. Team members research the questions, which may take minutes, or several days! The bonus question is optional.
13. Once you have answered the questions, visit the customs agent again. If any answer is incorrect, return to your sources and search for the correct information. If all three answers are correct, the customs agent gives you the coordinates of the next location and \$1,000 classroom dollars to use toward your next flight.
14. The travel agent will issue a new team ticket with a destination city and departure and arrival times. With a classroom wall clock, everyone can observe the time of departure.
15. If a team chooses to answer the bonus question, and answers it correctly, its travel time is reduced to five minutes. However, if its response is incorrect, the team will be penalized with five additional minutes of travel time.
16. The bonus question can only be attempted once. The travel agent reveals the correct answer for the bonus question after a bad guess.
17. Teams will work their way through the destinations in the contest, researching the various questions, over the course of several weeks.
18. Often, the team in the lead will change from week to week. All teams must complete the contest.
19. A team cannot win if it owes money upon arriving at its final destination, so try to avoid those erroneous flights!
20. These procedures shall be posted during the contest.

*I will now divide the class into teams. Here are the coordinates of your first destination! Let the race begin!*

# Teacher's Key

## Answers for "Racing Around the World"

### Abuja, Nigeria

1. The character of Abuja has been shaped by the two renowned rock formations around it: the Zuma Rock, known as the "Gateway to Abuja," and the Aso Rock.
2. Nigeria was under the imperial rule of the Royal Niger Company (beginning in 1886) and then Great Britain itself (1900) until 1960.
3. Extraction of oil is the main basis of Nigeria's economy.

**Bonus:** The Niger River flows into the Gulf of Guinea on the Atlantic Ocean

.....

### Cairo, Egypt

1. The Pyramids of Giza are part of the skyline of Cairo. Nearby sits the Sphinx.
2. Completed in 1970, the Aswan High Dam was built to control river flooding, store water for agricultural irrigation, and produce hydroelectricity.
3. Only about 3 percent of the land is arable.

**Bonus:** The White Nile (which originates in Rwanda) and the Blue Nile (from Ethiopia) flow into the Nile.

.....

### Cape Town, South Africa

1. Table Mountain can be picturesque, but it's sometimes shrouded in clouds.
2. The Great Escarpment.
3. "Apartheid," racial separation established by laws in South Africa, lasted for 60 years.

**Bonus:** South Africa is currently the world's largest producer of platinum, gold, and chromium.

.....

### Istanbul, Turkey

1. Constantinople.
2. The two straits of Turkey are the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles.
3. Turkey was once part of the Ottoman Empire.

**Bonus:** Pipelines transport oil and natural gas to nations in Western Europe and are a major source of income for Turkey.

.....

### Tel Aviv, Israel

1. Jaffa has been a fortified port for at least 4,000 years.
2. Jerusalem is sacred to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.
3. Cut diamonds, high-technology equipment, and agricultural products (fruits and vegetables) are Israel's leading exports.

**Bonus:** The United Nations created Israel in 1948.

.....

### Dar es Salem, Tanzania

1. The Askari Monument commemorates African troops who fought and died during World War I. Rudyard Kipling wrote the

inscription that appears in English and Swahili.

2. Tanzania contains the highest point in Africa, Mt. Kilimanjaro; the largest lake in Africa, Lake Victoria; and the deepest lake in Africa, Lake Tanganyika.
3. Tanganyika and Zanzibar merged to form Tanzania.

**Bonus:** "Teacher" in Swahili is mwalimu.

.....

### Beijing, China

1. The Forbidden City was the imperial residence for more than 500 years.
2. The largest plateau in China, the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, is also known as the "Rooftop of the World."
3. China's major export is manufactured consumer goods.

**Bonus:** In the 2008 Summer Olympics, the United States won 110 metals; China won 100.

.....

### Jakarta, Indonesia

1. Dutch (The Netherlands).
2. Indonesia is an Archipelago composed of more than 17,000 islands.
3. Muslim traders brought Islam to Indonesia during the 1200s C.E.

**Bonus:** Indonesia is often threatened by tsunamis, which are caused by earthquakes.

.....

### Moscow, Russia

1. The Kremlin also houses a museum and marked historic sites.
2. "Taiga" is land covered by coniferous forest. "Tundra" is land with permafrost and little vegetation; both are found in northern Russia, with the tundra being the northernmost.
3. Russia's main exports include petroleum, natural gas, wood, chemicals, and steel and other metals.

**Bonus:** The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was officially dismantled in 1991.

.....

### Mumbai, India

1. The Gateway of India is where King George V of England landed on a visit in 1911.
2. "Bollywood" is a term used to describe the film industry in India, centered in Mumbai, which was once named "Bombay."
3. Some of the major rivers in India are the Ganga (or Ganges), Indus, Brahmaputra, Narmada, Tapti, Godavari, Krishna, Kaveri, Mahanadi, Sindhu, Saraswati, and Yamuna.

**Bonus:** Hindi is the most widely spoken language and the official language as stated in the Constitution. But English is the most important language for national, political, and commercial communication.

20th century?

**Bonus:** Name one of the natural resources that travels across Turkey.

.....

**Tel Aviv, Israel**

1. This ancient port on the Mediterranean Sea is part of modern Tel Aviv.
2. The city of Jerusalem contains sites that are sacred to what three major religions?
3. Name two of Israel's major exports.

**Bonus:** What international body created Israel and when?

Rastaman/commons.wikimedia.org



A century-old building in front of a modern skyscraper in Tel Aviv, Israel (2009).

.....

**Jakarta, Indonesia**

1. A national monument commemorates Indonesian independence in 1945 from what ruler?
2. Geographically, Indonesia is an [blank?] composed of [blank?] islands.
3. What group of people brought Islam to Indonesia, and when?

**Bonus:** Indonesia is often threatened by [blank?], which are caused by earthquakes.

Kevin Aurell/commons.wikimedia.org



Jakarta skyscrapers, Indonesia (2007).

**Moscow, Russia**

1. This walled complex of government buildings, palaces, and cathedrals is the traditional center of the Russian government.
2. Define: "taiga" and "tundra." Where are these two habitats found in Russia?
3. What are some of Russia's main exports? (Name three.)

**Bonus:** What does U.S.S.R. stand for? When was it officially dismantled?



Embankment along the Moscow River, Russia (2005).

Esoloviev/commons.wikimedia.org

.....

**Mumbai, India**

1. In 1915, Mohandas K. Gandhi, passed through the [blank?] (3 words) in Mumbai, which was built in honor of an English King.
2. What is "Bollywood," and what city is it centered in?
3. What are some of the major rivers in India? (Name three.)

**Bonus:** What is the official language of India? What is the most important language today for commerce and government in India? 🌐

Rhaessner/commons.wikimedia.org



A famous monument in Mumbai, India (2003).



# Racing Around the World

## Questions about the Destinations

### Abuja, Nigeria

1. What is the Zuma Rock?
  2. Which nation imposed imperial rule on Nigeria for more than 50 years?
  3. What is the main basis of Nigeria’s economy?
- Bonus:** Into what gulf does the Niger River flow? That gulf is part of which ocean?
- .....

### Cairo, Egypt

1. What stone structures remind the visitor to Cairo that this city has roots to ancient times?
  2. List three reasons why the government of Egypt built the Aswan High Dam.
  3. What percentage of the total land in Egypt is arable (farmable)?
- Bonus:** What two rivers flow into the Nile? Where do they originate?
- .....

### Cape Town, South Africa

1. What mountainous rock formation is part of the coastal landscape of Cape Town?
  2. What is Apartheid, and how many years did it exist?
  3. What is the mountainous region (stretching across several nations in Southern Africa) that separates the highland interior from the coastal strip?
- Bonus:** South Africa is the world’s largest producer of several metals. Name two.



View of Cape Town Harbor, South Africa (2004).

Andreas Tusche/commons.wikimedia.org

### Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

1. The Askari Monument in this city honors African soldiers who fought in what war?
  2. Tanzania contains three unique African landforms: [blank?] (the highest point in Africa), [blank?] (the largest lake in Africa), and [blank?] (the deepest lake in Africa).
  3. What two nations merged to form Tanzania?
- Bonus:** How do you spell teacher in Swahili?
- .....

### Beijing, China

1. Name the walled city-within-a-city that was the palace of the Emperor of China.
  2. What is the largest plateau in China? What is a second name for it? **Hint:** It is often referred to as the [blank?](4 words).
  3. Is China’s major export raw natural resources, manufactured consumer goods, or weapons?
- Bonus:** In the 2008 Summer Olympics, how many medals did the U.S. and China each win?



Mythical guardian lion with cub, Beijing, China (2008).

Jane Richardson/Duke University

### Istanbul, Turkey

1. What was the name of Istanbul under the Roman Empire?
2. What are the two straits of Turkey?
3. Turkey was part of what empire from 1299 C.E. into the

continued on page 15



# Is This Candy an Advertisement for Cigarettes? A Media Literacy Activity

Steven S. Lapham

Brands, icons and symbols permeate our visual culture. Too often we assume that everyone interprets the symbols the same way. Yet, as we know from current events, symbols like the American flag can mean different things to different people.

—Center for Media Literacy<sup>1</sup>

**A** box of Target bubble gum (page 16) resembles a pack of cigarettes. The white box with its centered red circle is a dead ringer for a pack of Luck Strike.<sup>2</sup> What does this box of candy mean to the consumer who might buy it? Your students might be likely consumers of this product.

Here is an outline of a classroom activity that could be used with a unit of study on media literacy, advertising in the industrial age, current events, or health. It's a discussion based on seven questions.

*Question 1—“What is this Product?”—seems to have an obvious answer, but does it?*

*Questions 2-6 in this activity are actually the “Five Key*

*Questions” to ask when analyzing media messages, as advocated by the Center for Media Literacy (CML).*

*Question 7 is especially important for our students to discuss as consumers—and as citizens.*

The procedures of this 50-minute activity are flexible, and teachers could create a writing assignment for reflection and assessment based on any one of the questions.

## 1. What is this product?

One could kick off the classroom discussion by holding up a box of Target chewing gum and asking students, “What is this product?” At a quick glance, some children may think it's

an actual pack of cigarettes, but the words “bubble gum” are there. Other students may have purchased a similar box, or been given one by their friends or parents. If students show any confusion about what the product is—well, that would be worth pointing out. (See question 6.)

## 2. Who created this message?

Ask students to speculate about this. Someone might guess that a tobacco company makes the candy and created the ad.

(Now why would a cigarette company have any interest in making such a product?) The candy is, in fact, made by World Candies of Brooklyn, New York, which sells its products all over the world.

Once students are engaged in the conversation, they will be motivated to learn some of the tools they'll need when analyzing media messages—useful vocabulary terms (page 15). Pause in the discussion to go over these terms with the class. Then, as you proceed through steps 3-7, use this product to generate an example for each term. For example, as you discuss question 4, ask, Who might be the “target audience” of this product packaging?

## 3. What creative techniques are used to attract my attention?

Some of these elements of design in this package are effective in their own right. Big red circles can be used

to sell candy, cigarettes, soap, or clothes; think of the Target department store logo.

On the other hand, there are certainly similarities between



the packaging of this candy and that of a pack of cigarettes: the proportions of the box, the image and colors, the styles of font, and the blue tab at the top that resembles a tax stamp. The sticks of gum themselves are wrapped in white paper with a tan tip. (Another variety of Target candy features little white sticks of sugar with red tips.) What might young consumers find attractive about the design and words used in this packaging?

Advertisers have a wide array of techniques to use in constructing their persuasive messages. Social research has shown that people do make all sorts of links in their minds between very different things. Is candy the *product* here, or is candy being used as a *technique* for selling yet another product?

#### **4. How might different people understand this message differently?**

What people think about this product might depend on how old they are. A five year old might enjoy this candy for one reason, while a ten year old enjoys it for another.

Some children might notice cigarette advertising in magazines, see adults smoke, and then be attracted to a similar-looking product. The situation raises interesting questions. Does the “cigarette image” of the packaging help sell the candy to such children? Or does the candy help sell cigarettes to teenagers, who enjoyed the candy as kids? Or are both forces at work over the years?

What kind of social research could we do to study this question? Is it possible that some people establish life-long habits as children, while others are not affected by eating candy in any negative way? Are some children more vulnerable to picking up the bad habit of smoking? What might be the characteristics, the “risk factors,” of such children?

#### **5. What values, lifestyles, and points of view are represented in, or omitted from, this message?**

For children, it’s often fun to pretend to be an adult. Since it is illegal to sell or give cigarettes to minors, smoking is something that only adults can do. Does this product convey the message that “smoking is a way to have fun and be mature”?

Is there a particular lifestyle that your students associate with smoking? Can students determine where such ideas came from? A key point to make for the students is that often—even as adults—we are not fully aware of how concepts and opinions originated and then evolved in our minds. This makes social research into such questions challenging.

#### **6. Why is this message being sent?**

Advertisers work hard to create links or “associations” in the minds of the consumer. For example: This cigarette will make you tough and rugged like a cowboy! This drink will make you strong and fast like an athlete! This food will make your family have fun just like this bunch at the beach!

Certainly, candy makers want to sell more candy. If a child

thinks that a box of cigarettes is exciting or a desirable “sign of being grown up,” maybe it would be useful to link a box of cigarettes (that adults would use) with a box of candy (that children would use).

#### **7. What should I do in response to this message?**

What should you do as a consumer? Would your students consider buying this candy for themselves? Would they hand a box of Target to a younger sibling? Why or why not?

What should one do as a citizen? Maybe we should petition some branch of government to take action, banning candy that looks like cigarettes. But that would limit our freedom as producers and consumers. Today, it’s not illegal to in the United States to sell candy that looks like cigarettes, space creatures, rocks, or anything else.

Or maybe we should ask social scientists to do research on the question of whether this type of candy encourages children to smoke once they reach adulthood. But how long would this research take? How much would it cost? And how would you begin to study this question about human behavior and attitudes? We cannot simply ask people if they are influenced by an advertisement because they may say, “No influence!” when actually, if we observed them in the store—or over several years—they do change their behavior after exposure to advertisements!

#### **Personal Responsibility**

Responsible parents will make up their own rules about what their children are allowed to buy. Parents can certainly forbid their child to buy candy cigarettes. We don’t need a new law for that to happen, so maybe no government action of any sort is called for.

All advertisements include a “call to action,” an appeal to “buy this product,” but there is a difference between what the ad may call for us to do and what we may decide to do. We are all responsible for the choices we make, no matter what message advertisements are aiming to deliver. So there is certainly a role for the individual consumer to play. But is there also a reasonable role for government to play?<sup>4</sup>

#### **Government Protection**

The United States does have important regulations about foods, drugs, and products like tobacco. At the federal level, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulates food products—as well as advertising about food. For example, it is against the law for advertisers to claim that a food will help prevent a specific disease unless scientific research has shown this to be accurate.

In the 1960s, smoking began to be heavily regulated and taxed because medical studies showed it to be a deadly product. Whereas cars and guns cause fatalities, neither product is necessarily dangerous if the owner uses it responsibly. Cigarettes are different. Cigarettes, *when used as*

directed, will kill you.

A federal law banning the advertising of cigarettes on television took effect on January 1, 1971. But cigarette advertising is still a major source of income for many magazines today.

Do candy cigarettes advertise tobacco to children? Would it be reasonable for citizens to petition their congressmen to direct the FDA to ban candy that is packaged to look like cigarettes?<sup>3</sup> If so, congress might then write a new law. Some people think it's a good idea. The selling of candy cigarettes has been banned in St. Paul, Minnesota, as well as in Australia, Canada, Finland, Norway, the Republic of Ireland, Thailand, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia.<sup>5</sup>

### How Our Minds Work

Eating candy in moderation will not necessarily harm you. But humans do make associations between one product and another. For example, a child who enjoys riding a tricycle will probably, eventually want to learn how to ride a bicycle.

How strong is the association between a child enjoying a piece of candy that looks like a cigarette and a teenager smoking his or her first real cigarette? There is no easy answer to this question. But it is vital that our students be aware of the question and discuss it openly.

STEVEN S. LAPHAM is an associate editor at the National Council for the Social Studies.

### Notes

1. Center for Media Literacy Lesson Plan #3B, "Silent Symbols Speak Loudly: Icons, Brands, and You", [www.medialit.org/reading\\_room/article697.html](http://www.medialit.org/reading_room/article697.html). Read about Center for Media Literacy ([www.medialit.org](http://www.medialit.org)) magazine *Media & Values* and visit the Lesson Plan Library at [www.medialit.org/reading\\_room/rr4\\_lessonplan.php](http://www.medialit.org/reading_room/rr4_lessonplan.php).
2. Although filtered varieties were discontinued in North America in 2006, R. J. Reynolds continues to market non-filtered Luck Strike cigarettes in the United States. "History of Lucky Strike Cigarettes." [lucky-strike-cigarettes.blogspot.com/2008/03/history-of-lucky-strike-cigarettes.html](http://lucky-strike-cigarettes.blogspot.com/2008/03/history-of-lucky-strike-cigarettes.html).
3. Petition to Ban Candy Cigarettes, [www.thepetitionsite.com/2/Ban-candy-cigarettes-in-the-USA](http://www.thepetitionsite.com/2/Ban-candy-cigarettes-in-the-USA). Several nations have banned the sale of "candy cigarettes."
4. Performance Expectation (a): "Examine persistent issues involving the rights, roles, and status of the individual in relation to the general welfare." VI Power, Authority, & Governance, in National Council for the Social Studies, *Expectations of Excellence: Curriculum Standards for Social Studies* (Washington, DC: NCSS, 1994): 94.
5. *Star Tribune* (April 8, 2009), [www.startribune.com/local/stpaul/42714232.html](http://www.startribune.com/local/stpaul/42714232.html); [Care2petitionsite, www.thepetitionsite.com/2/Ban-candy-cigarettes-in-the-USA](http://Care2petitionsite.com/2/Ban-candy-cigarettes-in-the-USA).

## Vocabulary for Media Literacy

12 Key Terms	Definition
Audience	those who engage with a media text. reading, hearing, or viewing the message
Advertisement	a message that has the primary purpose of selling a product
Brand	the name, logo, slogan, or design of a specific product (See also "image")
Consumer	the person who buy the products
Corporate Identity	the name of the company that made the product (See also "image")
Framing	deciding what will be in the picture and what will be left out
Image	the illustration in an ad; this term can also be used to mean the overall impression that people have about a product or a corporation, the "image in their heads"
Media	methods of communicating information to people. The singular is "medium." Television is a medium of communication.
Packaging	any material surrounding the product. Often, advertising is part of the packaging
Product	the item being sold
Production	the work of making a product, its packaging, or the advertising for it
Regulation	laws that control what is in a product and how advertisers describe it
Target Audience	a group of people that advertisers wish will buy or use their product
Text	the written part of an advertisement or product

Source: Based on MediaWise: Critical Questions about Food Ads, [www.medialit.org/pdf/mlk/mediawise.pdf](http://www.medialit.org/pdf/mlk/mediawise.pdf)

## Handout

# What Do You Think about this Product?

Take a careful look at this product. Read the fine print from the sides of the box. Then read and discuss the seven questions below. There are no simple answers to some of these questions, no clear “right” or “wrong” answers that everyone will agree on. But these are important questions, especially for middle school students. What do you think? What choices will you make as a consumer and as a citizen?

1. What is this?

---

2. Who created this message?

---

3. What creative techniques are used to attract my attention?

---

4. How might different people understand this message differently?

---

5. What values, lifestyles, and points of view are represented in, or omitted from, this message?

---

6. Why is this message being sent?

---

7. What should I do in response to this message?

---



Source: See the Five Key Questions (included above as 2-6) and discussion at the Center for Media Literacy, [www.medialit.org](http://www.medialit.org).